

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows, this listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 - 21 (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 20, wherein the capsule of the variable heat damping layer is operable to function at a temperature of at least about 300°C when heated by a selected one of electrical heating means and non-electrical heating means.
23. (Canceled)
24. (Canceled)
25. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 20, wherein the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has an internal pressure of about 0.01 mbar at room temperature and an internal pressure of about 50 mbar at a temperature of about 300°C.
26. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 49, wherein the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer is continuously adjustable to an arbitrary thermal conductivity value between the first and second thermal conductivity value.
27. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 20, wherein ~~the a~~ power of the current applied to the electrical heating means can be continuously regulated and thus the thermal conductivity of the variable

heat damping layer can be adjusted to any thermal conductivity value approximately in a range between 0.3 W/m²K and 10 W/m²K.

28. (Canceled)
29. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 49, wherein the variable heat damping layer is disposed in a selected one of a side wall and a door of the dishwasher.
30. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 49, wherein the variable heat damping layer is disposed in a selected one of the top and the bottom of the dishwasher.
31. (Currently Amended) The dishwasher according to claim 37 49, wherein a wall of the washing container bounding the interior of the washing container is at least partially configured as a condensing surface made of flexible material, comprising at least one of a plastic film, a metal film having a selected one of an aluminum component and a non-aluminum component, and a material that is not a plastic film or a metal film.
32. (Currently Amended) A method for cleaning and drying items that have been disposed in a dishwasher, the dishwasher having at least one washing container for retaining items to be washed, the washing container having a heat damping layer which at least partially surrounds the washing container and the heat damping layer having a variable thermal conductivity in that the heat damping layer can be adjusted between at least a relatively lower thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a first rate and a relatively higher thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity

through the heat damping proceeds at a second rate higher than the first rate, the dishwasher having a heat generating means for generating heat in the washing container, the heat damping layer having a closed capsule containing hydrogen in which at least one metal hydride grid is arranged, which can form a chemical compound with the hydrogen and thus bind the hydrogen, the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has a selected one of a pressed glass and a non-pressed glass fibre core that is surrounded by a gastight jacket made of a selected one of a stainless steel sheet and a non-stainless steel sheet, the heat damping layer is configured such that heating of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has the effect that the hydrogen previously bound in the metal hydride grid is released, the pressure in the capsule of the variable heat damping layer increases, and the thermal conductivity of at least one of the capsule and the entire heat damping layer is increased and the heat damping layer is configured such that cooling of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has the effect that the free hydrogen is resorbed with the metal hydride grid in a chemical compound, the pressure in the capsule of the variable heat damping layer drops, and the thermal conductivity of at least one of the capsule and the entire heat damping layer is decreased, and the variable heat damping layer is in heat-conducting contact with one of walls of the washing container and with an outer wall of the dishwasher and the dishwasher being operable to execute at least one washing program comprising the following steps, the method comprising the steps of:

in coordination with the execution of a first section of a washing program during which thermal energy is built up in the washing container by the heat generating means, disposing the heat damping layer at the relatively lower thermal conductivity value such that the thermal energy built up in

the washing container is substantially preserved in the washing container; and

in coordination with the execution of a second section of the washing program during which a drying process is carried out, disposing the heat damping layer at the relatively higher thermal conductivity value such that at least some of the thermal energy present in the washing container succeeds to the surroundings via the heat damping layer.

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein before or during a washing process, a clear rinsing process or during a first section of the drying process the variable heat damping layer is adjusted to a low thermal conductivity and thermal energy is built up in the washing container by heat generating means, and during the drying process or during the second section of the drying process the variable heat damping layer is adjusted to a high thermal conductivity.
34. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 32, wherein the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer is regulated by the a program control of the dishwasher.
35. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 32, wherein the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer is regulated preferably by an electric heating means used to heat the variable heat damping layer.
36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein water deposited during the drying process in the washing container is passed from the washing container via at least one of discharge via a sump of the

dishwasher, discharge via a discharge pump, and discharge via a means other than a sump or a discharge pump of the dishwasher.

37. (New) A dishwasher comprising:

a washing container, the washing container having a plurality of walls forming a volume in which items to be washed are retained; and

a heat damping layer that at least partially surrounds the washing container, the heat damping layer having a variable thermal conductivity in that the heat damping layer can be adjusted between at least a first thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a first rate and a second thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a second rate different than the first rate, the heat damping layer having a closed capsule containing hydrogen in which at least one metal hydride grid is arranged, which can form a chemical compound with the hydrogen and thus bind the hydrogen, the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has a selected one of a pressed glass and a non-pressed glass fibre core that is surrounded by a gastight jacket made of a selected one of a stainless steel sheet and a non-stainless steel sheet, the heat damping layer is configured such that heating of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has the effect that the hydrogen previously bound in the metal hydride grid is released, the pressure in the capsule of the variable heat damping layer increases, and the thermal conductivity of at least one of the capsule and the entire heat damping layer is increased and the heat damping layer is configured such that cooling of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has the effect that the free hydrogen is resorbed with the metal hydride grid in a chemical compound, the pressure in the capsule of the variable heat damping layer drops, and the

thermal conductivity of at least one of the capsule and the entire heat damping layer is decreased, and the variable heat damping layer is in heat-conducting contact with one of walls of the washing container and with an outer wall of the dishwasher.

38. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 37, wherein a given portion of the variable heat damping layer has its thermal content respectively increased in correspondence with the heating of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer and decreased in correspondence with the cooling of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer, this given portion of the variable heat damping layer overlies the one wall of the washing container, and the closed capsule is within the given portion of the variable heat damping layer.
39. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 37, wherein the given portion of the variable heat damping layer is intermediate the one wall of the washing container and the outer wall of the dishwasher.